

**NATIONAL PAIR AT HOME
FOR
N.P. UBHAYKAR TROPHY - 2006**

**SUNDAY
23-04-2006**

**by
R. Venkatesh**

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

♠ K 5 4 3
♥ 3 2
♦ 10 6 5
♣ 8 6 5 2

♠ A Q 10 9 6
♥ J 7 6
♦ K J 7 2
♣ A



♠ J 8 2
♥ A Q 4
♦ A Q 9 3
♣ K 9 7

♠ 7
♥ K 10 9 8 5
♦ 8 4
♣ Q J 10 4 3

Using the Jacoby transfer bid, this is a possible sequence:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♣	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
5 NT	Pass	6 NT	All Pass

Four clubs and 4 ♥ are control-bids; 5 NT says "pick a slam," and East chooses notrump because of his club-heart holdings and flat distribution.

Good bidding will not be rewarded on this deal. The best matchpoint contract is 6 NT, with 6 ♠ a close runner-up, but either is destined to fail with both major-suit finesses offside. The only slam that makes is 6 ♦ by East, provided declarer does not take a spade finesse at trick one. (Note that the spade suit provides two discards, so the heart finesse is unnecessary.) If West plays 6 ♦, the contract is scuttled by a heart opening lead.

Score	NS	EW
+200	100	0
+100	96	4
+50	66	34
-140	40	60
-420	34	66
-450	30	70
-460	20	80
-800	19	90
-920	6	94
-940	4	96
-990	0	100

Board 2

East Deals

N-S Vul

♠ J 4

♥ 4 2

♦ A 10 8

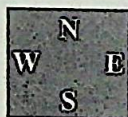
♣ K 10 9 8 7 2

♠ 7 3 2

♥ K J 10 9 5

♦ Q J 2

♣ A 6



♠ K Q 5

♥ A 8 6 3

♦ K 7 6

♣ Q 5 4

♠ A 10 9 8 6

♥ Q 7

♦ 9 5 4 3

♣ J 3

West

North

East

South

1 ♥

Pass

1 ♣

Pass

4 ♥

All Pass

2 ♥

Pass

West's jump to game is a bit optimistic - perhaps should invite with 3 ♥ or a help-suit try of 2 ♠ or 3 ♦ - but we've all done worse things. Whether a game is good probably depends on the degree of fit, although trying to be too scientific may help the opponents. The defense can shine here. Four hearts can be beaten if North leads the ♠ J and South ducks, which is surely the right play lacking a side entry. Even if the lead were a singleton, South couldn't benefit by winning the ace (North's only ruff would be declarer's loser). After any other lead (except ♦ A, then ♠ J) 10 tricks are easily won by drawing trumps and establishing the ♣ Q.

The only unbeatable game is 3 NT and again the key is a spade duck, but this time by declarer. No matter who plays it, North's ♠ J must be allowed to win the first spade lead to break the defenders' communication.

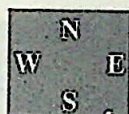
Score	NS	EW
+150	98	2
+100	90	10
+50	80	20
-90	72	28
-110	66	34
-140	60	40
-170	56	44
-400	50	50
-420	30	70
-430	10	90
-450	4	96
-500	2	98

Board 3

South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ Q 10 5 2
♥ A 8 7 3
♦ Q
♣ A J 9 4

♠ 8 6
♥ K Q J 9
♦ A K 8 7 3
♣ 7 3



♠ A 9 3
♥ 10 6 4
♦ 9 4 2
♣ K 10 5

♠ K J 7 4
♥ 5
♦ J 10 6 5
♣ Q 8 6 2

A reasonable auction to this part-score hand :

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	Dbl	1 NT	2 ♠

In the long run it is suicidal to bid a weak major suit after an enemy takeout double; even if you locate a 4-4 fit it will usually play poorly with the trump honors offside and the likelihood of a 4-1 break. The only sensible way to reach hearts, is for West to open 1 ♥ with his sturdy suit - even if your approach is "five-card majors."

In spades, there are only three apparent losers, but the limit is nine tricks with any sensible defense. Declarer's trumps are too meager to negotiate all the ruffing and establish clubs without the defense getting four tricks. What about hearts for East-West? The limit is eight tricks, and an astute North player might double 3 ♥ for a magic 200.

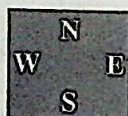
Score	NS	EW
+500	98	2
+420	94	6
+200	88	12
+170	78	22
+140	62	38
+130	54	46
+110	50	50
+90	32	68
-50	26	74
-100	10	90
-150	4	96

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

♠ J 9 8 2
♥ K J 9 8 5 4
♦ Q
♣ K 9

♠ 5 3
♥ 10 6 2
♦ J 9 6 3
♣ A 8 5 3



♠ A K Q 4
♥ A 3
♦ 8 7 4 2
♣ J 7 4

♠ 10 7 6
♥ Q 7
♦ A K 10 5
♣ Q 10 6 2

After a pass by West, North has the values for a weak two-bid. However, side four-card spade suit and out side values will influence many to pass. Most East players will open 1 ♠, although diehard five-card majorites will bid 1 ♦. West may or may not keep the bidding open. In any event North should bid 2 ♥, and this should buy the contract. If East-West bid any higher, they are in serious trouble; 3 ♦ should result in minus 200 even if South does not double.

The play in hearts is interesting. East should begin with four rounds of spades, which gives North a two-way guess for the ♥ 10. The percentages slightly favor playing West for that card (shorter in spades), which leads to the winning play of ruffing with the queen. Declarer would next lead a club, hoping to steal the king (then ditch the other club). But whatever happens, should later lead the ♥ 7 for a finesse.

Score	NS	EW
+1100	100	0
+500	94	6
+400	90	10
+200	80	20
+140	72	28
+110	60	40
+100	50	50
+80	44	56
-90	40	60
-100	24	76
-180	6	94

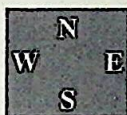
Board 5

North Deals

NS Vul

♠ 65
♥ KJ2
♦ AK32
♣ 10653

♠ KQ10
♥ 8743
♦ 1076
♣ 984



♠ 72
♥ 1095
♦ J985
♣ AK72

♠ AJ9843
♥ AQ6
♦ Q4
♣ QJ

Playing 1 NT forcing (or more accurately, 6-12 range as a passed hand), South has an awkward rebid problem. A lot could be said for a conservative 2 ♠. The raise to 2 NT is about right on values - hopefully the sixth spade will offset the lack of a point or two - and North has more than enough to accept. Indeed, North would bid again over 2 ♠, so all roads should lead to game, though some will get to 4 ♠.

It is debatable which game is superior. Without a club lead, 4 ♠ is clearly better; you can take the fast pitch and score up 420. But a club lead beats 4 ♠ outright, while 3 NT has its chances.

Can 3 NT be made against best defense? Not at double-dummy. East must lead a high club then a low one, with West unblocking the 9-8; then as soon as West wins a spade, the ♣ 4 through the 10-6 defeats. If East makes any other lead (including a low club), declarer can succeed by ducking a spade; then, depending on what the defense does in clubs, declarer can either set up the spades or endplay East in diamonds to win a second club trick.

Score	NS	EW
+660	100	0
+650	94	6
+630	90	10
+620	80	20
+600	60	40
+170	46	54
+140	20	60
-100	20	80
-200	4	96
-500	0	100

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

♠ K J 9 7

♥ Q 7 3

♦ 7 3

♣ K 9 7 5

♠ Q 10 4

♥ J 8 2

♦ Q J 2

♣ J 6 4 2



♠ A 2

♥ A K 10 9

♦ A K 5

♣ A Q 10 8

♠ 8 6 5 3

♥ 6 5 4

♦ 10 9 8 6 4

♣ 3

West

North

East

South

2D

P

2C

P

4N

ALL Pass

3N

P

East promotes 24 HCP to the 25-27 range, after which West is obliged to invite slam and East declines. It is difficult to reject anything with a hand like East's, but everything is relative to what you have shown; and East is clearly at a minimum for 3 NT bid.

Can a slam be made? With the club and heart finesses working, it looks like 12 tricks: one spade, four hearts, three diamonds and four clubs; but these cannot be realized with one entry to the West hand, assuming South doesn't help with the opening lead. The limit is 11 tricks, and some will win less if they use the lone entry to lead clubs and mistime the play.

A defensive error may allow a few declarers to win 12 tricks. If the ♥J is led from dummy, North must cover - normal technique since the honor led is unaccompanied by a touching card. If North were to duck, declarer could switch to clubs then catch North in an endplay in the black suits. (This is true even after an original spade lead.)

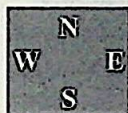
Score	NS	EW
+500	100	0
+200	92	8
+100	86	14
-170	80	20
-600	76	24
-630	66	34
-650	56	44
-660	36	64
-680	16	84
-690	10	90
-1440	6	94
-1680	0	100

Board 7

South Deals
Both Vul

♠ A 9 6 2
♥ 4 2
♦ Q 6 3 2
♣ Q 6 3

♠ Q 7 4 3
♥ 6
♦ A 10 7 5 4
♣ 8 5 2



♠ K 10 8
♥ 10 7 5
♦ K J 8
♣ A J 9 7

♠ J 5
♥ A K Q J 9 8 3
♦ 9
♣ K 10 4

Here is a standard auction to the borderline game for North-South :

West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	All Pass	

North's raise to 4 ♥ is a close decision. Chances are good that at least one of North's queens will be useful (South's shortness is most likely to be in spades) and the presence of a doubleton heart would probably sway one to bid. A case could also be made to try 3 NT, but that appears too dangerous with North's tenuous stoppers.

In hearts, barring a gift, winning 10 tricks depends on the club finesse which works. If West leads a spade (or ♦ A then a spade), North's entry will be driven out early and declarer must immediately lead a club to the 10. If North plays in 3 NT, only a spade lead (or a diamond lead and timely spade switch) can beat it. But even after a friendly club lead, declarer can be held to nine tricks for an inferior result.

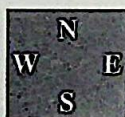
Score	NS	EW
+790	100	0
+650	96	4
+630	94	6
+620	68	32
+600	44	56
+200	40	60
+140	28	72
+100	20	80
-100	14	86
-200	2	98

Board 8

West Deals
None Vul

♠ Q 3
♥ A K J 10
♦ 10 6 4 3
♣ Q J 7

♠ K 7 2
♥ 7 4
♦ K J 9 2
♣ 6 4 3 2



♠ A 9 6 5
♥ Q 9 8 6 5 2
♦ 7
♣ 9 5

♠ J 10 8 4
♥ 3
♦ A Q 8 5
♣ A K 10 8

Here is a standard auction to the borderline game for North-South :

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♦	2 ♥	Dbl
All Pass			

South's double is negative, and North converts it to penalty with strong hearts - a reasonable choice but it backfires. With routine play East will come to six tricks (down two) for a superior score. In fact, if South begins with three rounds of clubs, East can win seven tricks by leading a diamond early (ace wins), then winning two spades before leading a heart from dummy (without cashing ♦ K); North is eventually endplayed and both of East's spades go away on the diamonds.

Left to their own steam NS would reach 3n. In notrump, a heart lead by East makes nine tricks easy by developing a spade trick. It is possible to win 10 tricks, either by finessing the ♠ 8 or by several workable endplays, but these seem dubious.

This deal offers more evidence that bridge is a bidder's game. East's weak jump overcall with a lousy suit and a side four-card major may be revolting to some, but it upsets the apple cart.

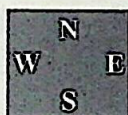
Score	NS	EW
+500	98	2
+460	94	6
+430	82	18
+400	50	50
+300	40	60
+180	30	70
+130	26	74
+100	20	80
+90	16	84
-50	10	90
-100	4	96

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

♠ Q J
♥ 6 5 3 2
♦ 2
♣ A K Q 10 9 4

♠ A K 10 8 7 5
♥ J 10 8 4
♦ Q
♣ 8 2



♠ 9 6 4 2
♥ A K Q
♦ A J 8
♣ J 7 6

♠ 3
♥ 9 7
♦ K 10 9 7 6 5 4 3
♣ 5 3

Here is a standard auction to the borderline game for North-South :

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Dbl	5♦
5♠	All Pass		

Aggressive preemptive bidding is the hallmark of a winning player. How many diamonds would you bid with the South hand in this situation? At favorable vulnerability, 5♦ puts some real pressure on the opponents. Notice how uncomfortable this makes it for West; who would have an easy 4♠ bid over anything less, but now he has to grope at the five level.

In spades, 11 tricks are routine regardless of the lead (unless for some strange reason East becomes declarer and South leads a diamond). It would be nice if ♠ J and ♠ 3 are inter-changed, and make West pay with an uppercut on the third round of clubs.

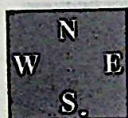
Score	NS	EW
+200	100	0
+100	96	4
-50	90	10
-100	86	14
-200	80	20
-500	70	30
-620	66	34
-650	40	60
-680	16	84
-710	10	90
-800	6	94

Board 10

East Deals
Both Vul

♠ K Q 6 5
♥ A 8 6
♦ A K 3 2
♣ 8 4

♠ J 8 7 2
♥ K 4 3
♦ Q 9 6
♣ A 10 7



♠ A 10 4
♥ J 5 2
♦ 10 7
♣ K Q 5 3 2

♠ 9 3
♥ Q 10 9 7
♦ J 8 5 4
♣ J 9 6

All E-W have to do is sit quietly, and North will open 1N and be endplayed in the bidding. Not a happy contract. As the clubs are run, declarer has various discarding options, but nothing really helps. The defense should get three more tricks to put declarer down two. North is probably wondering why he didn't just pass the hand out.

Some West's may ruin their good fortune with a light 1 ♣ opening in third seat. North will double, and East will either redouble or make a systemic bid to show a limit club raise. If North elects double again (dubious over 3 ♣), South may end up in 3 ♥ and escape for one down with careful play.

In clubs, three rounds of diamonds (best) holds West to eight tricks. If North leads one top diamond then the K ♠ to the ace, nine tricks can be made by leading four rounds of clubs and gauging the ending right. Of course, E-W do better to play in notrump where they are likely to win the same eight tricks as on defense.

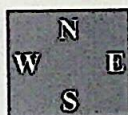
Score	NS	EW
+500	100	0
+200	94	6
+150	90	10
+110	86	14
+90	72	28
+80	64	36
-90	56	44
-100	44	56
-110	30	70
-180	22	78
-200	14	86
-300	4	96

Board 11

South Deals
None Vul

♠ K 10 8 7 5 2
♥
♦ Q 10 8 4
♣ K 10 9

♠ A 6 4
♥ 8 4 3
♦ A 7
♣ A J 8 6 3



♠ J 3
♥ A 10 7 5
♦ K J 6 5 2
♣ Q 4

♠ Q 9
♥ K Q J 9 6 2
♦ 9 3
♣ 7 5 2

Most Souths will begin with a weak two-bid, and this might steal the whole pot. Some Wests will double 2♥ (or overcall 3♣), which rates to work out well as East has an obvious 3 NT response. But a double by West could backfire: North may bid 2♠ (fearing a penalty pass), after which East is likely to make the same bid, counting on West for a spade stopper. South, with no outside entry, should then lead the ♠Q and East is down two. Note that 3 NT would come home after the ♥K lead thanks to the 3-3 club break and the diamond finesse.

The play in hearts is not appealing. Assume the defense wins two diamonds, then a low diamond as South sheds a club and West ruffs; ♣ A and a club to the king; spade to queen, ace ♣ J (East throws his last spade) ruffed; ♥ K to the ace; high diamond. South must ruff with the ♥ 9 to escape for down two.

In spades, it appears North can do a trick better, but if West shifts to a low club early, you better go up with king.

Score	NS	EW
+500	100	0
+200	94	6
+140	86	14
+100	80	20
+50	70	30
-50	60	40
-100	50	50
-110	38	62
-150	24	76
-200	16	84
-400	10	90
-430	6	94

Board 12

West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A J 8 7 5 3 2
♥ A Q J 9
♦ A
♣ 10

♠ K 10
♥ 10 7 5 4
♦ Q 8
♣ A 7 5 4 2



♠ Q 9
♥ K 8
♦ K 10 9 5 2
♣ K J 9 8

♠ 6 4
♥ 6 3 2
♦ J 7 6 4 3
♣ Q 6 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 NT
Pass	4 ♠	All Pass	

Is North worth a 2^c ♣ opening? South's 3^c ♣ is the popular "cheaper minor second negative" to show 0-4 HCP. North rightfully mentions the good heart suit, as it could uncover a spectacular fit. For example, opposite as little as ♠⁰ x ♥⁰ 10-x-x-x ♦⁰ x-x-x-x ♣⁰ x-x-x-x, even 6^c ♥ might make while 4^c ♣ goes down. South's 3^o NT is natural but dubious (some experts would prefer 3^c ♣), then North completes the description of the hand.

Despite the 2-2 trump break, 4^o ♠ is destined to fail unless the defense slips or declarer takes a remarkable view in hearts. With routine play (♥⁰ A then ♥⁰ Q) declarer is bound to lose two heart tricks, whether trumps are drawn or not. 1^c ♣ openers will be dancing in the streets when they discover that game goes down.

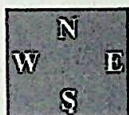
Score	NS	EW
+930	100	0
+650	94	6
+620	90	10
+500	84	16
+200	76	24
+170	66	34
+140	50	50
+110	42	58
+50	36	64
-100	22	78
-110	8	92
-200	4	96

Board 13

North Deals
Both Vul

♠ 10 4 3
♥ A 10 8 2
♦ 10 9 8 7 6
♣ Q

♠ A K J 9
♥ K 6 4
♦ A K Q 5 4
♣ 6



♠ Q 8 7 6 2
♥ J 9
♦ 3 2
♣ J 7 3 2

♠ 5
♥ Q 7 5 3
♦ J
♣ A K 10 9 8 5 4

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	4 ♣
Dbl	Pass	4 ♣	All Pass

How many clubs would you bid as South? The point is to put maximum pressure on your opponents so they have a chance to go wrong. The presence of a four-card heart suit has little bearing once partner is a passed hand.

This time West has a routine takeout double and East lands in 4[♣], which may look easy but requires careful play. Assume the ♠⁰ K lead then a low club (not best) which is ruffed high (pitching simplifies the play); ♠⁰ K; ♠⁰ 9 to the queen; ♦⁰ A-K-Q (discard a club); diamond ruff; spade to jack; then a diamond to North (pitching a club) for the guaranteed endplay. At double-dummy it is possible to win 11 tricks - run the ♠⁰ 9 as your one and only spade play, then crossruff. On the bidding this is almost realistic, but imagine if it lost to the 10.

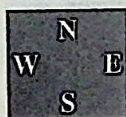
Score	NS	EW
+800	100	0
+500	96	4
+200	90	10
+130	84	16
+110	80	20
+100	70	30
-90	56	44
-170	44	56
-600	36	64
-620	24	76
-650	8	92
-790	4	96

Board 14

East Deals
None Vul

♠ J 9
♥ A 9 7 3
♦ A K J 8 2
♣ A 9

♠ K 8 3
♥ J
♦ 7 6 5 4
♣ Q J 7 6 2



♠ Q 10 6 5 4 2
♥ 6 5 2
♦ 3
♣ 10 5 4

♠ A 7
♥ K Q 10 8 4
♦ Q 10 9
♣ K 8 3

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 NT	Pass	5 ♠
Pass	5 NT	Pass	6 ♣
Pass	7 NT	All Pass	

The North-South hands are guaranteed to make 7^{NT} against any distribution, but the problem is getting there. North's 3[♥] is forcing per "two-over-one game-forcing" (possibly in standard yellow card as well). South then shows spade control, which is all North needs to use Blackwood (Roman key-card); 5[♠] shows two key cards plus the trump queen. Five notrump seeks specific kings, and 6[♣] shows it. North's only problem now is the ♦^Q; but lacking methods to inquire, one could assume that card since opener raised diamonds immediately, so the worst you'd expect is ♦^Qx-x-x-x, which makes the grand 53 percent - slightly inferior; let's get lucky and win this event!

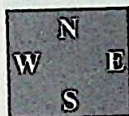
Score	NS	EW
+1520	92	8
+1510	80	20
+1100	76	24
+1020	72	28
+1010	50	50
+990	28	72
+800	26	74
+520	24	76
+510	14	86
+480	10	90
+300	6	94
+100	2	98

Board 15

South Deals
N-S Vul

♠ J 8 6
♥ J 8 6 4
♦ K 10 5 3
♣ A K

♠ A 10 7
♥ K 10 9 2
♦ Q 6 4
♣ Q 8 7



♠ K 4 2
♥ 7 5
♦ A J 9 8 2
♣ 10 5 2

♠ Q 9 5 3
♥ A Q 3
♦ 7
♣ J 9 6 4 3

West

North

East

South
Pass

Pass

1 ♦

Pass

1 ♠

All Pass

Since South is a passed hand, 1st ♠ is nonforcing and North smartly passes to reach a superior contract. The play in spades is complex. After a friendly heart lead to the queen, South leads a diamond to the king, ace. If E-W clear trumps, South's clubs can be set up for eight tricks, so assume a heart back to the ace. Declarer now can score eight tricks on a crossruff: ♣^o A; diamond ruff; ♠^o K; diamond ruff; club ruff; diamond ruff with ♠^o Q, overruffed; then later finesse West for the ♠^o 10.

Those who play super-weak notrumps (10-12) should do well here, buying the contract with 1st NT by West. Regardless of the lead, eight tricks can be made by picking up the diamonds - run the queen then finesse for the 10 (if North covers the ♦^o Q, the seven falls so West's six can hold the lead on the second round).

Score	NS	EW
+300	100	0
+140	96	4
+120	90	10
+110	86	14
+100	80	20
+50	74	26
-90	64	36
-100	50	50
-120	40	60
-180	36	64
-200	24	76
-300	8	92

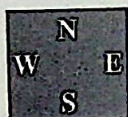
Board 16

West Deals

E-W Vul

♠ Q 9
♥ K Q 4
♦ J 8 7 2
♣ 10 8 4 2

♠ 8 7 5
♥ J 10 8 6 2
♦ K 9 3
♣ J 3



♠ J 10 6 4
♥ A 3
♦ Q 10 6 5
♣ A 9 5

♠ A K 3 2
♥ 9 7 5
♦ A 4
♣ K Q 7 6

West

Pass

1♥

All Pass

North

Pass

1 NT

East

1♦

Pass

South

Db1

2 NT

South's takeout double is a close choice over 1⁰ NT, but it seems right with diamonds being the shortest suit. After that it is well-judged all around. There are those who almost never stop in 2⁰ NT, and too often it seems the defense is lacking and they succeed. This is a good example - only eight tricks can be made legitimately but in practice many will make 9 tricks.

East has an opening lead problem; either the ♠⁰ 4 or the ♦⁰ 5 is reasonable (laying down the ♥⁰ A is surely not correct). To make a tough fight assume the latter, ducked to the king. West should use his only entry to lead the ♥⁰ J; queen, ace; then a diamond to the ace; spade to queen; club to king. Declarer now can cross to the ♥⁰ Q (dangerous if hearts were 4-3) to lead another club or just bang down the ♣⁰ Q, either way coming to eight tricks.

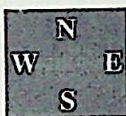
Score	NS	EW
+500	100	0
+430	96	4
+400	90	10
+200	80	20
+180	76	24
+150	70	30
+130	62	38
+120	52	48
+110	40	60
+90	30	70
-50	18	82
-100	8	92

Board 17

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 9 6 5 3
♥ 10 8
♦ A Q 3 2
♣ J 10 7

♠ 7
♥ K 9 6
♦ K 8 7 6 4
♣ K Q 9 8



♠ Q J 2
♥ J 5 4 3 2
♦ J 10
♣ A 4 2

♠ A K 10 8 4
♥ A Q 7
♦ 9 5
♣ 6 5 3

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 NT	All Pass		

This is for the other side to stop in 2n. East follows the usual practice of bidding a three-card minor; West invites game in notrump and East rejects.

If North finds the best lead of the ♥⁰ 10, declarer can win eight tricks by leading twice toward the ♣⁰ K-Q. It appears declarer can do better by capitalizing on the spade lie, but entry problems prevent it. For example: ♥⁰ Q; club to king; duck a spade; heart to ace; run the spades. Declarer gets squeezed and eight tricks are the limit.

If North instead leads the ♣⁰ J, declarer is a tempo ahead and is able to win nine tricks. Doing so, however, requires an anti-percentage play in spades - the proper finessing technique is low to the ten - plus, it seems like a better overall plan to work on diamonds. Most experts would wind up with eight tricks.

Score	NS	EW
+200	100	0
+150	94	6
+100	80	20
+50	56	44
-90	46	54
-100	40	60
-120	32	68
-150	24	76
-180	20	80
-300	14	86
-400	10	90
-430	2	98

Board 18

East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ K J 9 7
♥ J 10 8 7 6 5
♦ 5 3
♣ J

♠ 10 5 2
♥ A 3
♦ A Q 7
♣ K 10 9 8 5



♠ A 8 6 3
♥ 9
♦ 10 9
♣ A Q 7 6 4 3

♠ Q 4
♥ K Q 4 2
♦ K J 8 6 4 2
♣ 2

West

North

East

South

3 NT

All Pass

1 ♣

1 ♦

After South's overcall, West should consider a forcing club raise (there might be a slam); but the balanced nature of the hand plus two diamond stoppers suggests the practical bid. Note that a jump to 2 NT would be nonforcing in competition, so West has to bid game.

In notrump there are 10 easy tricks (with the diamond finesse) and no way to make more aside from a gross defensive error like: North has an inspiration to lead a spade, and declarer holds up dummy's ace until the third round. Now there's a cold double squeeze for 11 tricks.

Those who play in clubs should win 11 tricks. No doubt, a few desperadoes will be in slam going down. The best chance for 12 tricks is to cash the ♠⁰ A early, draw the enemy trumps, strip out the red suits, and exit with a spade. It might work if South held ♠⁰ K-x and failed to unblock.

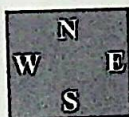
Score	NS	EW
+150	100	0
+100	94	6
+50	90	10
-150	84	6
-180	78	22
-200	76	24
-400	60	40
-420	46	54
-430	30	70
-460	14	86
-490	10	90
-650	6	94

Board 19

South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ J 5
♥ A 10 7 6
♦ A K 8 2
♣ 10 8 2

♠ 8 7
♥ J 4 3
♦ J 10 9 7 6
♣ 9 6 3



♠ K 10 9 6 2
♥ K 8 5 2
♦ -
♣ A Q 7 4

♠ A Q 4 3
♥ Q 9
♦ Q 5 4 3
♣ K J 5

West

North

East

South

Pass
Pass

1 NT
4 ♥

Pass
All Pass

1 ♠
2 ♥

All roads should lead to 4⁰♥ (famous last words). In hearts, 11 tricks should be won. Assume the ♦⁰J lead taken by the king, ♠⁰J to the ace, and a club shift won by the queen. A variety of plays will achieve the same result, but best is: ♥⁰K; ♥⁰A; ♦⁰A pitching the last club loser; ♠⁰K; spade ruff; ♣⁰A; spade ruff. The South hand is now good except for the high trump.

A few declarers might be lured into a dubious safety play: after the ♥⁰K drops the nine, finessing and losing to the queen. With this wasted effort declarer must take the spade finesse to recoup 11 tricks. Even at IMPs declarer can succeed with two trump losers on most layouts, and this could be dreaded unsafety play. For example, if East returned a spade you might be set with a bad spade break.

Score	NS	EW
+590	98	2
+480	94	6
+450	74	26
+430	52	48
+420	46	54
+400	36	64
+200	30	70
+170	26	74
+110	20	80
-50	12	88
-100	2	98
-200	0	100

Board 20

West Deals
Both Vul

♠ 10 8 5 4
♥ A J 10 6
♦ K 9 8
♣ 5 3

♠ 7 6
♥ K Q 9 7 4 2
♦ 6 5 4
♣ 8 4



♠ A K Q J 2
♥ 5 3
♦ Q 7 3
♣ A 10 7

♠ 9 3
♥ 8
♦ A J 10 2
♣ K Q J 9 6 2

West
Pass
Pass
2 ♥

North
Pass
Pass
Pass

East
1 ♠
Dbl
2 ♠

South
2 ♣
Pass
All Pass

This will be a trouble deal for many East-Wests. Some brazen Wests will open 2^o ♥ (poor judgment at this vul with such a flat, barren hand) and get even higher when East tries for game when 6 tricks are the limit.

In spades, East can win only six tricks if South gets heart ruff. Even after the ♣^o K lead, declarer is unlikely to win and draw trumps, so the opportunity remains. In clubs, South can win 10 tricks with good guessing. Assume three rounds of spades, ruffed with the ♣^o 9. To avoid a trump promotion, cross to the ♥^o A and lead a club, ducked to the king. Next lead the ♣^o Q, and all that remains is to guess diamonds. Poor defense! On ^o the first club lead East should play the ten, the card known to hold. Now declarer is likely to assume A-10 alone and continue with a low club to avoid the promotion when West has 8-7-4. A^o nice swindle.

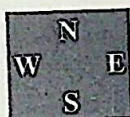
Score	NS	EW
+800	98	2
+500	92	8
+400	90	10
+300	82	18
+200	62	38
+130	46	54
+110	38	62
+100	24	76
+90	18	82
-100	12	88
-110	10	90
-200	6	94

Board 21

North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 7
♥ K 9 4
♦ A J 10 8 5
♣ 5 4 3 2

♠ K 8
♥ 5 3 2
♦ 9 6 4 2
♣ J 8 7 6



♠ A Q J 10 6 3
♥ A J 10 7 6
♦ 3
♣ A

♠ 9 5 4 2
♥ Q 8
♦ K Q 7
♣ K Q 10 9

West

North
Pass

East
1♠

South
All Pass

Standard bidders are likely to miss this excellent game, as the auction comes to a screeching halt. Should West keep the bidding open with four points? Granted, the ♠^o K is a nice card, but responding 1^o NT is more likely to get you overboard. This is just an unfortunate case. East could have opened 2 ♣^o (not most expert's choice though) with great playing potential.

In spades, East will win anywhere from 8 to 11 tricks depending on the lead and play. At ^odouble-dummy, 11 tricks are available with any lead by finessing the ♠^o 8 to gain an extra entry to dummy to finesse hearts twice; or by leading the ♥^o J early from hand. Back to the real world: After a club lead, the most likely result is 10 tricks (losing two hearts). The killer is a diamond lead, which starts the tap. Declarer should win nine by clearing the hearts after discovering the 4-1 trump break.

Score	NS	EW
+300	98	2
+100	94	8
+50	90	10
-100	86	14
-110	80	20
-140	76	24
-170	60	40
-200	38	62
-230	28	72
-420	18	82
-450	8	92
-480	4	96

Board 22

East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 9 7 3
♥ J 8 6 5
♦ A Q J
♣ K 8 7

♠ J 10 5
♥ Q 7 4
♦ 7 4 2
♣ J 9 3 2



♠ Q 4
♥ A 9 3
♦ K 9 8
♣ Q 10 6 5 4

♠ A K 8 6 2
♥ K 10 2
♦ 10 6 5 3
♣ A

West

North

East

South

Pass

1 NT

Pass

1 ♠

Pass

3 ♠

Pass

2 ♦

All Pass

Pass

4 ♠

North's delayed jump raise shows 11-12 points with three trumps (with four trumps North would raise directly), and South clearly has enough to bid game. North could rebid 2N with a flat shape, but the tenuous stoppers don't offer comfort.

In spades, declarer should win 9 or 10 tricks depending on the heart guess. Declarer is likely to get this wrong based on the subtle inferences that West chose not to lead a heart and that East has shown up with most of the other high cards - unless East tries to be sneaky and shifts to a low heart, in which case declarer would play east for the ace, not the queen. An original heart lead would seem to eliminate the guess, but it creates another: To succeed, declarer must shun the diamond finesse to obtain a fast discard.

Those who play in notrump will not be happy with a club lead. The best declarer can do is to win eight tricks.

Score	NS	EW
+430	98	2
+420	86	14
+400	70	30
+200	66	34
+170	62	38
+140	56	44
+120	50	50
-50	38	62
-100	12	88
-150	2	98

Board 23

South Deals
Both Vul

♠ A Q 8
♥ A 10 8 7 6
♦ A J 10 4 3
♣ -

♠ 9
♥ Q J 5 3
♦ K Q 7
♣ 10 6 5 3 2



♠ K 10 7 6 5
♥ K 9 2
♦ 9 6 5 2
♣ 9

♠ J 4 3 2
♥ 4
♦ 8
♣ A K Q J 8 7 4

West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	4 ♣
Pass	4 ♠	Dbl	5 ♣
Dbl	All Pass		

Here's a misfit that should create some excitement. Note the rebid of 2^o ♣ (not 1^c ♠) over 1^o ♥. Bidding up the line is fine, but you have to draw the line somewhere and this hand warrants bidding clubs and more clubs. East's double of 4^o ♠ was a lead director, and West fell into the pattern with a dubious double.

There is no way to beat 5^o ♣. After a spade lead to the king, declarer has an easy time. With the ♦^o K lead, declarer can ruff out the ♦^o Q for the extra trick needed. The toughest lead is a heart, but even then there are several ways to succeed. The simplest is just to lead a low spade from dummy at trick two.

Score	NS	EW
+1100	100	0
+750	94	6
+690	90	10
+600	84	16
+630	80	20
+600	70	30
+500	60	40
+150	54	46
+110	48	52
-100	40	60
-200	24	76
-400	8	92

Board 24

West Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q 8 7 5 2
♥ 9 7
♦ K 7
♣ J 7 4

♠ J 6
♥ K Q
♦ J 4 2
♣ A K 10 8 6 2



♠ 9
♥ J 10 8 5 3 2
♦ A 9 8 5
♣ Q 5

♠ K 10 4 3
♥ A 6 4
♦ Q 10 6 3
♣ 9 3

West
1 ♣
3 ♣

North
1 ♠
3 ♠

East
Dbl
4 ♥

South
2 ♠
All Pass

Stretching every inch out of the cards, here is one sequence to an average result: East's final bid is doubtful. A⁰ boost to 4^c ♣ would be more conservative, but as long as you're going to try for 10 tricks, it makes sense to speculate on game. It⁰ doesn't take much from partner in hearts to give 4⁰ ♥ a play. N-S also gauge well not to compete to 4^c ♠, which would be a phantom sacrifice.

The ♥⁰ K-Q is a pleasant sight. Unfortunately, good defense should prevail. After a spade lead to the ace, North has an obvious shift to the ♦⁰ K which allows the defense to get a diamond ruff - down one. East might even duck the ♦⁰ K (a key play if North held K-Q-10 or K-Q-x-x) and wind up down two.

In spades N-S can win nine tricks. A⁰ heart switch by the defense looks pretty automatic, so any hopes of winning 10 are spoiled.

Score	NS	EW
+590	98	2
+420	94	6
+170	86	14
+140	70	30
+100	56	44
+50	50	50
-50	40	60
-100	30	70
-140	20	80
-170	16	84
-420	10	90
-450	6	94

Board 25

North Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 9 3 2
♥ K 9 6 4 3 2
♦ 7 2
♣ 7 5

♠ A K J 6
♥ Q 7
♦ Q 9 6 5
♣ K 8 2



♠ 7 5 4
♥ A J 10 8
♦ A K 3
♣ Q 10 6

♠ Q 10 8
♥ 5
♦ J 10 8 4
♣ A J 9 4 3

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

West's response in the major is the practical approach. Strict up-the-line bidders may respond 1♦, but it is not preferred because (1) it complicates the auction, (2) it gives more information to the opponents, and (3) it allows North a convenient window to bid hearts (hopefully, not on this deal).

Speaking of North, there are a few, who will cast their fate to the wind (mistaking "nonvulnerable" for "invulnerable"), by opening 2♥ or 3♥. Justice should be served if it goes: P P Dbl, and East converts for a hefty penalty.

In notrump, 12 tricks can be won. After a low club lead from South, all declarer has to do is take a few finesses and establish a second club trick; and if South ducks ♠ A, will be squeezed for 13 tricks. After a passive lead it's more difficult, but a strong declarer may find the squeeze without the count: In the ending West holds ♦ Q-9 ♣ 8-2, East: ♥ A ♦ 3 ♠ Q-10, and South: ♦ J-10 ♣ A-J; then the ♥ A destroys South.

Score	NS	EW
+110	98	2
-200	92	8
-600	88	12
-630	82	18
-650	76	24
-660	56	44
-680	36	64
-690	20	80
-720	4	96

Board 26

East Deals
Both Vul

♠ Q 10 4
♥ K 10 9 8 7 4
♦ 9 7 2
♣ Q

♠ J 9 6 2
♥ Q 6 5 3 2
♦ Q 10
♣ A 6



♠ 7 5 3
♥ -
♦ J 8 4 3
♣ J 9 5 4 3 2

♠ A K 8
♥ A J
♦ A K 6 5
♣ K 10 8 7

West	North	East	South
		Pass	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	All Pass	

Three diamonds is a Jacoby transfer bid, then the raise to game is a mild slam try. The logic is that if there were no hope for slam, North would bid 4[♦] over 2[°]NT as a Texas transfer to 4[°]♥. South has already stretched for 2 ♣ bid, so wisely rejects.

Eleven tricks should be won in hearts. It is possible to win 12 on a trump coup: Win any lead (say, a spade); force out the ♠[°]A; win any return (say, a spade); run the ♥[°]J; cash the ♦[°]A-K and ♣[°]K, throwing a diamond; ruff a minor; spade to your hand; overruff a minor, then cross to the ♥[°]A. Beautiful, but also double-dummy.

A better score will go to those who play in notrump. The same 11 tricks are available provided declarer wins the ♥[°]A and overtakes the ♥[°]J to establish the suit.

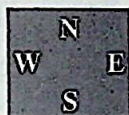
Score	NS	EW
+1430	98	2
+990	94	6
+680	90	10
+660	86	14
+650	72	28
+630	56	44
+620	46	54
+200	30	70
-100	12	88
-200	2	98

Board 27

South Deals
None Vul

♠ J 3 2
♥ 8 5 4
♦ Q 10 7 6
♣ 9 6 2

♠ A 10 9 8 5
♥ A K 10 9
♦ J 8 4
♣ 4



♠ 7 6 4
♥ 7
♦ A 5 3 2
♣ J 10 8 7 3

♠ K Q
♥ Q J 6 3 2
♦ K 9
♣ A K Q 5

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♠	1♥
Rdbl!	3♥	Pass	Dbl
Dbl	All Pass		Pass

South will not appreciate being outbid with strong hand, but is likely to be punished at the three level. Some South players will escape the double, but none will escape the loss of four trump tricks and two aces. West's enterprising action nets plus 300 and a good score.

The play in spades is routine for eight tricks, but declarer can win nine with accurate play after a heart lead: Win the ♥⁰ A and start clubs, low to the seven; win the spade return; heart ruff (do not cash the ♥⁰ K); J, covered, ruff; heart ruff; ♣⁰ 10, covered, ruff; then exit with a spade. South now must shift to a diamond, else declarer makes an incredible 10 tricks.

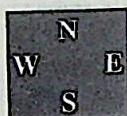
Score	NS	EW
+300	98	2
+110	94	6
+80	82	18
+50	72	28
-50	60	40
-100	50	50
-110	40	60
-140	30	70
-300	20	80
-500	2	98

Board 28

West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ J 10 7 5 4 2
♥ K 3
♦ Q 9 4
♣ J 5

♠ 9 8 6
♥ Q 8 5 4
♦ K 10 8 5
♣ 10 7



♠ A Q 3
♥ J 9
♦ J 7 3 2
♣ Q 9 4 2

♠ K
♥ A 10 7 6 2
♦ A 6
♣ A K 8 6 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠

Some might argue that South is not worth a jump shift, but a mere 2 ♣^o seems pessimistic. The key bid is South's raise to 4 ♠^c; the ♠^o K may solidify partner's suit, and the control-rich hand is likely to play well in spades.

The spade game is hardly cold, but 10 tricks should come home. After a diamond lead, ducked, and a diamond back, the ♠^o K is led to the ace. East shifts to a heart (best) to the king, the ♠^o J goes to the queen, then a heart. The spade lie presents no real threat, so anything sensible works.

Other games should fail. In 3 NT, declarer lacks the entries to develop spades, and even the double-dummy play of leading the ♠^o J (to lose only one club trick) will not produce a ninth trick against accurate defense.

Score	NS	EW
+790	98	2
+630	94	6
+620	86	14
+600	78	22
+170	72	28
+110	62	38
+90	54	46
-100	40	60
-200	20	80
-300	4	96

Board 29

North Deals

Both Vul

♠ A 9 4 2

♥ 4

♦ 10 8 4

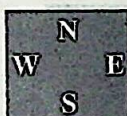
♣ K Q 10 5 4

♠ J 10 5 3

♥ A J 10 7 6 3 2

♦ -

♣ J 8



♠ 8 7

♥ Q 8 5

♦ J 6 5

♣ A 9 6 3 2

♠ K Q 6

♥ K 9

♦ A K Q 9 7 3 2

♣ 7

West

3 ♥

Pass

North

Pass

Dbl

5 ♦

East

Pass

Pass

All Pass

South

1 ♦

4 NT

North's double is negative (showing four spades) and South has a tough problem. It is reasonable to bid 3 NT, gambling on the clubs, or perhaps even 4♣ to shoot for a top in a 4-3 fit (also North might have five spades). 4 NT as Blackwood, intending to play 6♦ if North has two aces (a fair chance), otherwise 5♦ is a reasonable option. Five diamonds is virtually effortless for 11 tricks, and only a gross defensive error will allow more.

The excitement will peak at tables where South declares 3 NT. What a difference a lead makes! South has 11 tricks with a heart lead, 10 tricks with a spade lead (he can win 11 in the ending), but he gets punctured with a club lead, heart switch - down four!

Four spades is always makeable (by South, not North) even after a club lead and heart switch, tapping North. Declarer must not draw trumps (the ♠ A can be cashed) and lead his minor-suit winners to tap West.

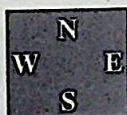
Score	NS	EW
+1370	100	0
+750	96	6
+690	92	8
+660	88	12
+630	84	16
+620	72	28
+600	58	42
+200	36	64
+110	28	72
-100	20	80
-200	8	92
-620	2	98

Board 30

East Deals
None Vul

♠ K 10 2
♥ 2
♦ K Q J 4 2
♣ K J 9 3

♠ Q J 8
♥ A Q 8 4
♦ A 10 9 8 7
♣ A



♠ A 9 4 3
♥ 9 5
♦ 6 5
♣ Q 8 7 6 4

♠ 7 6 5
♥ K J 10 7 6 3
♦ 3
♣ 10 5 2

West

North

East
Pass

South
2 ♥

2 NT

All Pas

The timid may wish to close their eyes, but many will open with South's hand. West has an awkward hand, but 2 NT seems best despite the singleton club. Another reasonable choice is to pass, hoping (dreaming?) partner will reopen with a double, or if not, take your plus at 50 a trick. In notrump, eight tricks can always be made; and if North leads the $\diamond^0$ K, it offers up nine: Win the $\diamond^0$ A; continue diamonds; win the club return (best) and continue diamonds. This gives you eight tricks with both major-suit finesses. If North leads another club, you can win the queen; or if North defends passively, you can lead the $\spadesuit^0$ Q-J (duck when North covers) to establish a ninth trick in spades.

In hearts, South can be held to five tricks with perfect defense: Cash the A; $\spadesuit^0$ Q, king, ace; club ruff; $\spadesuit^0$ J; $\diamond^0$ A and a diamond. When West wins first heart trick, a third diamond is upercurt by East, allowing West to win all his trumps.

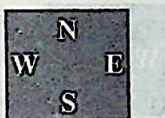
Score	NS	EW
+300	98	2
+150	92	8
+100	80	10
+50	58	42
-50	44	56
-100	40	60
-120	30	70
-150	20	80
-400	12	88
-420	8	92

Board 31

South Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A K J 8 7
♥ A K 2
♦ J 9 7
♣ 6 3

♠ 2
♥ 10 7 6 5
♦ K 10 2
♣ K Q J 8 5



♠ 9 6
♥ Q J 9 3
♦ A Q 5 4
♣ 10 7 2

♠ Q 10 5 4 3
♥ 8 4
♦ 8 6 3
♣ A 9 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	3 ♠
All Pas			

Some steadfast "Law followers" will raise 1^c ♠ to game, but this makes no sense. With both opponents passing, it must be right to bid your values with a single raise. North makes a help-suit game try in diamonds, and South rejects with poor holding in that suit. Justice served; nine easy tricks and virtually no chance for 10.

Some East-West pairs will enter the fray, perhaps with 3^c ♣ (or a takeout double) by West. Eight tricks is the limit in either clubs or hearts. Against clubs, South gets a heart ruff. Against hearts, North can get a club ruff, though it's not so easy: After a spade lead to the king, North should not lead a club immediately (South will assume a singleton) but return a diamond; then upon winning the ♥^o K, the ♣^o 6 should be read as a doubleton, and South ducks to preserve the entry.

Score	NS	EW
+920	98	2
+300	94	6
+170	90	10
+140	62	38
+100	30	70
+50	24	76
-100	16	84
-140	2	98

Board 32

West Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 5 4
♥ K Q 4 3 2
♦ 10 6 2
♣ 10 4 2

♠ K Q 10 8 2
♥ 9
♦ Q 3
♣ A K J 6 3



♠ J 9 3
♥ J 8 7
♦ A 8 5
♣ Q 9 8 7

♠ A 7 6
♥ A 10 6 5
♦ K J 9 7 4
♣ 5

West
1 ♠
4 ♠

North
Pass
5 ♥

East
2 ♠
Dbl

South
Dbl
All Pass

South faces an awkward decision after West's opening bid is raised to two. A 3^c♦ overall looks normal, but this might lose out on the heart suit. Fortunately, North has a heart suit and the double leads to a profitable sacrifice. The danger in doubling is that partner may bid too many clubs - of course, you would correct to diamonds, but that too could be a disaster.

Five hearts should be down two with careful play. Win the first or second spade, cross to the ♥⁰ K and lead a diamond to the jack, queen. This line of play looks lucky (West could get a ruff with a second trump); but the 3-1 trump break was predictable, and drawing a second round makes declarer susceptible to a trump promotion or to club taps.

Four spades is a routine make, though it could be beaten with the defense: North leads a club then South underleads his ♥⁰ A to get a ruff. Keep an eye on that pair!

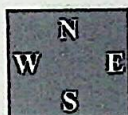
Score	NS	EW
+200	98	2
+100	90	10
-100	84	16
-170	78	22
-300	70	30
-500	60	40
-600	52	48
-620	30	70
-650	8	92
-710	2	98

Board 33

North Deals
None Vul

♠ J
♥ A K 5
♦ Q 8 6 3 2
♣ A 6 5 3

♠ Q 4
♥ Q 9 8 6 4 2
♦ 10 5
♣ K 4 2



♠ K 10 9 5 2
♥ 10 7
♦ K J
♣ Q 10 8 7

♠ A 8 7 6 3
♥ J 3
♦ A 9 7 4
♣ J 9

West	North	East	South
	1 ♦	1 ♠	2 ♦
2 ♥	3 ♦	All Pass	

It is rare when a common bidding sequence offers five reasonable options. Consider South's problem after the 1st ♠ overcall: It is sensible to bid 1 NT, 2nd ♦, 2nd NT (limit), 2nd ♠ or 3rd ♦ (limit raise or better in diamonds), or trap pass.

In diamonds declarer can win 10 tricks with almost any play (clearing trumps, for one), and one line of play to win 11: Assume the ♥⁰ 10 lead; jack, queen, ace; lead a spade to the ace; ruff a spade; cash the ♥⁰ K, and lead the losing heart throwing a club. East is caught in an unusual three-suit squeeze involving the trump suit: If East discards a black suit, declarer can establish a long card in that suit; else wastes a trump trick. This variation of the backwash squeeze might be called a "frontwash" squeeze.

Those who play in notrump should be held to eight tricks, although some will be given nine when West leads a heart, or if East cashes his spades prematurely to establish South's eight.

Score	NS	EW
+500	96	4
+400	90	10
+300	82	18
+180	78	22
+150	80	20
+130	60	40
+120	48	52
+100	38	62
0	30	70
-50	22	78
-100	8	92
-150	4	96

Board 34

East Deals

N-S Vul

♠ Q 7

♥ J 10 9 5 2

♦ 8 3

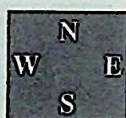
♣ Q 9 5 4

♠ K 6

♥ K 3

♦ K 9 7 6 5

♣ K 8 7 2



♠ J 8 4

♥ 8 6

♦ A Q J 10

♣ A J 10 6

♠ A 10 9 5 3 2

♥ A Q 7 4

♦ 4 2

♣ 3

After 1^c ♦ by East and 1^c ♠ by South, West will be torn between bidding notrump and raising diamonds. A^o lot depends on system. West has the values to insist on game; so if 2 NT or 3^c ♦ would be a limit bid (nonforcing), must commit to 3 NT or bid 2 ♣ as a good raise.

In any event, 3^o NT by West will be a popular contract. After the ♠ Q lead to the king, declarer has only eight tricks, so the club suit must be tackled at some stage. A losing finesse into North would be disastrous (spade through); but a losing finesse into South would be OK as long as South has the ♥^o A, which is likely on the bidding. Therefore, declarer should guess clubs.

Accurate play brings home 11 tricks: Win no more than three top diamonds, then lead a club to the king and back for the finesse; finish the diamonds (discarding a heart); finish the clubs, and exit with a heart. South must give you another trick with the ♥^o K or the ♠^o J.

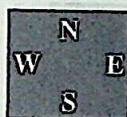
Score	NS	EW
+140	100	0
+50	90	10
-110	80	20
-150	66	34
-200	50	50
-400	34	66
-430	20	80
-460	14	86
-500	8	92
-550	4	96

Board 35

South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A K 6 5 4 2
♥ 8 7 6 4
♦ 8
♣ 8 7

♠ 10 9 8
♥ J 10 9
♦ 10 5
♣ A Q 9 5 4



♠ Q J
♥ Q 5 3
♦ A K Q 9 6
♣ J 6 3

♠ 7 3
♥ A K 2
♦ J 7 4 3 2
♣ K 10 2

West

North

East

South

2 ♠

Pass

Pass

Pass

Pass

3 ♣

3 ♠

Dbl

All Pass

Many would disapprove of West's opening with a side four-card major, but it is acceptable if the side major is weak (J-x-x-x or worse). East judges well to pass - despite 15 HCP there rate to be at least four top losers. South's reopening double is doubtful (many will pass) but feels right as a passed hand. North bids clubs, and East competes.

In spades, the limit is eight tricks if the defenders cash out (or win two clubs and lead a diamond). After the likely ♥⁰ J lead, this seems obvious, so anyone beyond 2⁰ ♠ is headed for a minus. Of course, if North were to lead a trump, declarer can win 10 tricks.

A few Easts may steal the show in no trump (nine tricks after a diamond lead), and even if South starts with a top heart, the club shift is far from obvious.

Score	NS	EW
+300	96	4
+200	86	14
+150	78	22
+100	64	36
-50	50	50
-110	42	58
-140	24	76
-150	14	86
-170	10	90
-620	4	96

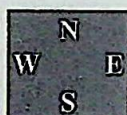
Board 36

West Deals

Both Vul

♠ A Q 9 6
♥ J 8 5
♦ Q 10 7 6 4 3
♣ -

♠ K 4
♥ -
♦ A K 9 2
♣ A K 9 8 5 4 3



♠ 5
♥ A K 9 7 4 3 2
♦ 8
♣ Q 10 6 2

♠ J 10 8 7 3 2
♥ Q 10 6
♦ J 5
♣ J 7

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	1 ♦	1 ♥	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
3 NT	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
6 ♣	All Pass		

Reaching this laydown club slam is a challenge, especially if East is enamored by long heart suit. West's hand is a bit heavy for 3^c ♣, but it pays to go slow on a potential misfit. East marks time with a cue-bid, hoping to hear a heart preference, then shows the club fit. After West cue-bids the ♦^o A, East's 4^c ♥ is questionable - it should be logically forcing, but many would disagree - then West bids the obvious slam. With a first round spade control, West would bid 4^o ♠ over 4^o ♥, leading to a cold grand slam.

In clubs, 12 tricks are easy, and many will win 13 when North fails to cash the ♠^o A. It's certainly a difficult lead choice. In hearts, some will win 12 tricks after a diamond lead yields a quick discard (nice bid, North). A spade lead, of course, holds it to 11 tricks, and an inspired club lead holds it to 10 if North cashes his ace.

Score	NS	EW
+200	98	2
+100	92	8
-200	90	10
-620	80	20
-640	70	30
-650	64	36
-680	60	40
-1100	54	46
-1370	38	62
-1390	14	86
-1430	6	94
-1440	2	98

Board 37

North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A J 10 5 3
♥ Q 6 5 3
♦ J 2
♣ 10 6

♠ 8 4
♥ A K 8 7 2
♦ K 10 3
♣ J 9 7



♠ 9 7 6
♥ J
♦ A Q 9 8 5 4
♣ 5 3 2

♠ K Q 2
♥ 10 9 4
♦ 7 6
♣ A K Q 8 4

West

North

East

South

3 ♦

Pass

2 ♦

Dbl

3 ♠

All Pass

Of course, many players don't use weak two-bids in diamonds. If East passes, the bidding is likely to begin: 1^o ♣ 1^o ♥ 1^o ♠ 2^o ♦ (everybody has a suit) then South will raise spades; West will raise diamonds, and the same contract is reached if North misjudges to compete. Another possibility is a 3^o ♦ opening, certainly reasonable at these colors, after which South may double and North will bid the same.

Either side wins exactly eight tricks, losing the first five. Against diamonds, North-South have an easy cash-out. Against spades, East will lead his singleton heart for a similar result.

Score	NS	EW
+620	98	2
+300	90	10
+170	84	16
+140	76	24
+110	68	32
+100	60	40
+50	50	50
-90	40	60
-100	26	74
110	14	86
-130	10	90
-200	4	96

Board 38

East Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A Q J

♥ A K J 10 8

♦ 9

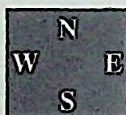
♣ A 10 8 4

♠ 9 5

♥ Q 7

♦ K Q 10 5 4 3

♣ Q 9 7



♠ 7 6 2

♥ 9 4 3 2

♦ A J 8

♣ J 5 3

♠ K 10 8 4 3

♥ 6 5

♦ 7 6 2

♣ K 6 2

West

North

East

South

2 ♦

Dbl

Pass

Pass

Pass

3 ♥

Pass

2 ♥

Pass

4 ♠

All Pass

3 ♠

The double followed by 3⁰ ♥ shows a strong hand but doubts about the best strain. (With a heart one-suiter, North should bid some number of hearts immediately.) South then repeats spades to show five with some useful values, and this leads to the routine game in 4⁰ ♠.

The friendly layout allows declarer to win 12 tricks with almost any reasonable play. After the ♦⁰ K lead, assume West shifts to the ♣⁰ Q (the proper card to avoid giving declarer three club tricks) won by the king. Not knowing the ♥⁰ Q is falling, best matchpoint play is to ruff a diamond, then draw trumps overtaking the second round. Assuming trumps break, the plan is to draw the last trump and take a ruffing heart finesse (pitching the last diamond) to ensure 11 tricks and make 12 when East has the ♥⁰ Q (barring Q-9-x-x-x). You'd still end up with at least 10 tricks even on a 4-1 trump break.

Score	NS	EW
+980	98	2
+510	90	10
+490	86	14
+480	64	36
+450	38	62
+420	30	70
-90	40	60
-100	26	74
-110	14	86
-130	10	90

Board 39

South Deals
Both Vul

♠ 9 8 6
♥ Q 10 9 5 4 3
♦ A 8 4
♣ 9

♠ J 10 7 5 2
♥ K J 2
♦ K 2
♣ Q T 2



♠ A Q 4 3
♥ -
♦ Q J 7 5 3
♣ A 8 6 3

♠ K
♥ A 8 7 6
♦ 10 9 6
♣ K J 7 5 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Dbl	Pass
4♠	All Pass		4♥

After North's weak two-bid is doubled for takeout, South has a number of options. Aggressive bid of 5⁰♥, hoping it to be a good save against 4⁰♠ and with some chance of luring the opponents to bid higher is the wrong choice on this hand, and routine defense leads to a huge penalty. Another possibility is to pass quietly, or perhaps raise to 3^c♥, so as not to push the opponents into a game they will probably make.

Against spades, North will lead a club. From declarer's point of view this has "singleton" written all over it, so the obvious move is to play a pair of aces immediately, with diamonds also friendly, that's 11 tricks. Easy game!! If declarer ducks the club lead, must drop the ♠⁰ K to make 10 tricks - a guess that seems indicated with North marked for the ♦⁰ A.

Score	NS	EW
+300	96	4
+200	86	14
+100	70	30
-100	60	40
-140	54	46
-170	50	50
-200	44	56
-500	40	60
-620	26	74
-650	10	90
-680	4	96
-800	0	100

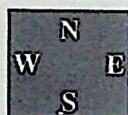
Board 40

West Deals

None Vul

♠ K 10 9
♥ 9 2
♦ K J 10 3
♣ Q 5 4 3

♠ Q 8 6 4 3
♥ 10 8 6
♦ Q 7 6
♣ J 9



♠ A 7
♥ A K J 7 5 4
♦ 9 8 4 2
♣ K

♠ J 5 2
♥ Q 3
♦ A 5
♣ A 10 8 7 6 2

West	North	East	South
Pass		1 ♥	2 ♣
Pass	3 ♣	3 ♥	Pass
Pass	4 ♣	All Pass	

This should be a battle between hearts and clubs, and the little fellows should win for a change. East's 3^o ♥ bid is a little aggressive, but the alternative of passing seems too timid. When 3^o ♥ comes back to North, 4^o ♣ is well judged because of the fourth trump. 4^o ♥ would probably be doubled for 300 and a horrible result for East-West.

In clubs, 10 tricks should emerge on the fortunate layout. Note that East is endplayed after winning two heart tricks, so may as well lead the ♠^o K (South should drop it anyway); then a simple spade finesse (or a diamond finesse through West) does the business. The alternative of running the ♦^o J through East is clearly poor because if East had the ♦^o Q, could always cover with Q-x or Q-x-x and force you to rely on the spade finesse. The best technique is to cash ♦^o A-K first in case the queen drops, then play West for the ♠^o Q.

Score	NS	EW
+300	100	4
+170	94	6
+130	76	24
+110	60	40
+100	50	50
+90	40	60
+50	30	70
-50	20	80
-100	14	86
-110	10	90
-140	8	92
-170	4	96

Board 41

North Deals
E-W Vul

♠ J 4
♥ 9 8 4
♦ J 9 8 5
♣ 10 6 4 3

♠ A Q 10 6 3
♥ -
♦ A K Q 3 2
♣ A K 8



♠ 8 7 2
♥ Q J 10 7 5
♦ 4
♣ Q J 7 2

♠ K 9 5
♥ A K 6 3 2
♦ 10 7 6
♣ 9 5

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1 ♥
Dbl	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
6 ♠	All Pass		

After South opens 1♥ in third seat, West must decide how to describe his powerful hand.

East must resist the impulse to pass 1♥ doubled - the likely result being down four (800). West must take the slight gamble to bid slam, as it would be difficult to get any cooperation from East.

Those who use the Michaels cue-bid may employ that gadget and reach 6♠ from the East side, but that is of little consequence.

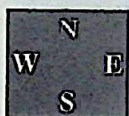
Score	NS	EW
-150	98	2
-230	92	8
-600	86	14
-650	80	20
-660	76	24
-680	56	44
-710	34	66
-800	26	74
-1430	14	86
-1460	2	98

Board 42

East Deals
Both Vul

♠ J
♥ A Q 9
♦ A J 9 2
♣ A K Q J 4

♠ A 7
♥ K 6 5 4 3 2
♦ 8 5 4 3
♣ 10



♠ 9 8 5 4 3
♥ J
♦ 7 6
♣ 9 6 5 3 2

♠ K Q 10 6 2
♥ 10 8 7
♦ K Q 10
♣ 8 7

After two passes West may open 2⁰♥. The suit is disgusting, but the 6-4 shape and the strategic advantage of preempting in third seat compensate for this.

How do you get to 5^c♣ (or 6^c♣ for all the marbles) after 2⁰♥? It is unattractive to double with a singleton spade, but with so many points, that is the best start. South will bid spades (assuming East passed). Now 3 NT is the practical bid though 3⁰♣ might work well on this hand.

Three notrump can be made after a heart lead: seven, jack, king, ace; but it requires double-dummy play. On the run of the clubs, East must discard three spades (else declarer sets up a diamond trick). Then a spade is led, West wins and returns a heart; but declarer refuses the finesse and exits with a heart to Bath-coup East in diamonds. Double dummy for sure!.

Five clubs is easy and 6⁰♣ is makable by taking the heart finesse (note the ♣⁰ 9 entry) to shed a diamond; then declarer establishes the last diamond.

Score	NS	EW
+1540	100	0
+1370	98	2
+910	94	6
+750	90	10
+620	84	16
+600	64	36
+500	42	58
+170	36	64
+150	24	76
+130	18	82
-100	10	90
-110	6	94

Board 43

South Deals
None Vul

♠ J 10 7 5 3
♥ J 10 8 3
♦ 4
♣ K 9 5

♠ A K 4
♥ 5
♦ Q 6 5
♣ A Q 6 4 3 2



♠ Q 8 2
♥ A K Q 7
♦ A K J 9
♣ 10 8

♠ 9 6
♥ 9 6 4 2
♦ 10 8 7 3 2
♣ J 7

With 34 HCP, most North-South pairs will routinely reach a slam. In notrump, 12 tricks should be won, and it all hinges on the club suit. The proper technique is start clubs by leading low from the North hand. As East, if you held ♣^o K-7, would you duck smoothly looking at A-Q-6-4-3-2 on your right? Many would not, which shows the advantage in this technique. In this layout East should play the ♣^o J, which wins, then declarer eventually will take the normal club finesse for his 12th trick.

Can a grand slam be made? Not in notrump. If declarer takes immediate club finesse, East must cling to heart stopper to prevent a squeeze against West. Surprisingly, 13 tricks are available in diamonds with double-dummy play.

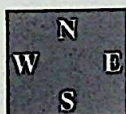
Score	NS	EW
+1520	100	0
+1020	90	10
+990	62	38
+980	40	60
+920	34	66
+520	30	70
+490	22	78
+460	12	88
+430	8	92
+170	4	96

Board 44

West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ K Q 4
♥ Q 9
♦ J 10 7 3 2
♣ Q 9 7

♠ J 10 7 3
♥ 10
♦ K 8 6
♣ K J 8 5 3



♠ A 9
♥ A 8 7 4 3
♦ A 9 5
♣ A 10 4

♠ 8 6 5 2
♥ K J 6 5 2
♦ Q 4
♣ 6 2

West
Pass
2 ♣
2 NT

North
Pass
Pass
Pass

East
1 NT
2 ♥
3 NT

South
Pass
Pass
All Pass

It is debatable what East should open. The "aces and spaces" suggest opening 1^o ♥, but rebid considerations suggest opening 1 NT. West has a routine Stayman response, then invites game in notrump.

South's choice of leads will affect the result. After a spade lead, declarer can capture the queen and return the ♠^o 9 (ducked) then ♣^o A, ♠^o 10 losing to North. On a heart shift, declarer can win the second round and make 10 tricks; but it seems wise to cash out for nine.

A heart lead is more effective, but declarer can still get home (even after losing a club) by capitalizing on the lucky spade lie and South's entryless hand. The best lead is the ♦^o Q. To succeed now, declarer must finesse North for the ♠^o Q - surely a double-dummy play.

Score	NS	EW
+150	100	0
+100	96	4
+50	82	18
-90	74	26
-110	70	30
-120	60	40
-130	52	48
-150	42	58
-180	34	66
-400	20	80
-430	10	90
-460	4	96

Board 45

North Deals
Both Vul

♠ 10 8 5
♥ A Q 7 2
♦ 10 3 2
♣ Q 8 5

♠ Q 4
♥ K J 8 6
♦ A K Q 6
♣ 7 6 3



♠ 7 3
♥ 10 4
♦ J 9 8 5
♣ A K 9 4 2

♠ A K J 9 6 2
♥ 9 5 3
♦ 7 4
♣ J 10

West

North

East

South

Pass

Pass

2 ♠

Dbf

Pass

3 ♣

All Pass

After two passes, South has a textbook weak two-bid, which might produce this sequence. North will consider competing to 3^o ♠, but the flat shape and dubious ♣^o Q suggest passing, especially if South is an aggressive bidder.

In clubs, eight tricks are routine. Regardless of the lead there is no way to avoid losing two spades, two hearts and a club. Even if South fails to shift to a heart, North cannot be endplayed by refusing to ruff.

In spades, the outcome will vary from 7-9 tricks depending on the spade guess and whether West gets a heart trick. After a top diamond lead and a heart shift, declarer must win and return a diamond (optionally cashing one or two spades first) to kill West's entry; then in time can develop a club discard for losing heart. Also, note that declarer will often misguess spades, abandoning the usual "nine never" in light of West's takeout double.

Score	NS	EW
+800	98	2
+500	94	6
+300	90	10
+200	80	10
+170	72	28
+140	64	36
+110	56	44
+100	40	60
-90	20	80
-100	16	84
-110	10	90
-200	4	96

Board 46

East Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q 10 8 2
♥ A J 5 3
♦ A 6
♣ Q 7

♠ -
♥ 6
♦ K Q J 10 7 4 3
♣ A 10 9 5 3



♠ 7 6 5 4
♥ 9 8 7
♦ 8 2
♣ K J 8 6

♠ K J 9 3
♥ K Q 10 4 2
♦ 9 5
♣ 4 2

Each side can win 11 tricks, yet only one player has extreme distribution. Opening $5^0 \spadesuit$ is a standout - not just resultwise, but based on the extraordinary playing strength and major-suit shortness - after which North should double. South's hand is too balanced to remove the double, so EW is headed for a great score with the likely correct guess in clubs.

If West opens anything less than $5^0 \spadesuit$, North-South will surely bid to $4^c \heartsuit$ or $4^0 \spadesuit$; then if West bids further, they will be more likely to compete to the five level.

The play in spades is routine for 11 tricks, irrespective of the lead, but in hearts, declarer is in danger of a spade ruff. This ruff is unlikely to be found, so West does best to bid one more for the road.

Score	NS	EW
+690	100	0
+450	74	26
+100	46	54
-50	40	60
-400	36	64
-550	18	82
-610	0	100

Board 47

South Deals
N-S Vul

♠ Q 10 7 5
♥ J 9 6
♦ 10
♣ K 10 8 4 3

♠ 4 2
♥ K Q 5 4
♦ K J 5 4 3 2
♣ 5



♠ A J 9
♥ A 10 8 7 3 2
♦ A 9 7 6
♣ -

♠ K 8 6 3
♥ -
♦ Q 8
♣ A Q J 9 7 6 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	1 ♠	2 ♠	1 ♣
Pass	Pass	5 ♣	4 ♠
5 ♥	Pass	6 ♥	Pass
			All Pass

East-West can make a grand slam in hearts, but this should elude all but a few in a highly competitive auction. North-South are slowed by the vulnerability, but some pairs will take the sacrifice in 6⁰ ♠ or 7⁰ ♣, either of which is profitable. But this may tempt East-West to bid 7^c ♥, after which North-South must bid 7^c ♠ to salvage any kind of score.

In spades it appears that declarer will lose just two trumps and a diamond, but the defense can do better: Lead a heart to tap South, then if declarer leads: (1) the 0 ♠ K, duck; (2) low to the 0 ♠ Q, win and continue hearts; (3) a diamond, continue diamonds to tap North; (4) a club, don't ruff. After any of these starts, proper defense can win at least four tricks.

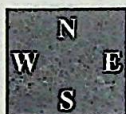
Score	NS	EW
+790	100	0
+620	96	4
+50	92	8
-100	90	10
-200	78	22
-440	64	36
-500	50	50
-940	34	66
-1010	24	76
-1100	14	86
-1440	4	96
-1510	0	100

Board 48

West Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 8 7 4 2
♥ J 10 5
♦ A J 8 7
♣ J 7

♠ 9 3
♥ K 6
♦ K Q 10 5
♣ 10 8 6 5 4



♠ A Q J 10 5
♥ Q 9 7 4 3
♦ 9 3
♣ K

♠ K 6
♥ A 8 2
♦ 6 4 2
♣ A Q 9 3 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	2 ♣
Pass	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
2 ♠	All Pass		

Action will be brewing at many tables, but events are likely to end peacefully (pun intended). South's overcall is not a thing of beauty, but the vulnerability is right. East reopens with 2^c♥ (rather than double) to indicate at least 5-5 shape and a min opening hand, and West takes a simple preference.

Suprisingly, 2ⁿ♣ can be made, and 2ⁿ♠ should go down. Against spades, South leads a diamond (least of evils) to the king, ace; then a trump to the king, and a trump back. Declarer lacks control to enjoy the long hearts. In fact, it requires double-dummy play not to go down two.

In clubs, South can win eight tricks provided the percentage play of low club to the jack is avoided. The play is complex; in many variations West will be endplayed to give declarer a fourth trump trick. Alternatively, declarer can establish a second heart trick by leading low to the 10.

Score	NS	EW
+300	96	4
+200	82	18
+100	62	38
+90	50	50
-50	46	54
-100	40	60
-110	30	70
-120	22	78
-140	14	86
-150	6	94

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